

## PROGRESS OF THE FLORA OF TROPICAL EAST AFRICA

### E. MILNE-REDHEAD

Owing to my heavy load of administration and other editorial duties (keeping the Kew Bulletin going), the day to day editorial work on the Flora has been very largely in the able hands of my colleague, Mr. Roger POLHILL, and I feel sure you will agree that progress has been good and that publication is continuing at a satisfactory rate considering the immensity of the task. Since the last meeting of the Association, 30 parts have been issued totalling about 1200 pages, the greater part of which is made up of the Cucurbitaceae by Mr. C. JEFFREY, the first part of the Gramineae by Dr. W. D. CLAYTON, the Caesalpinioideae by Mr. J. P. M. BRENNAN, and the first part of the Orchidaceae by Mr. V. S. SUMMERHAYES. The Annonaceae by Dr. B. VERDCOURT, the Papilionoideae by Messrs. J. B. GILLET, R. M. POLHILL, Dr. B. VERDCOURT and collaborators, and 10 other smaller parts will shortly be in press. The Papilionoideae is represented in East Africa by 1000 species and the completion of this account is a significant step forward. The second part of the Gramineae will shortly be submitted to the editors and good progress is being made with Acanthaceae by Miss. D. M. NAPPER, Celastraceae by Dr. N. K. B. ROBSON, Combretaceae by Mr. G. E. WICKENS, Compositae by Mr. C. JEFFREY, Malvaceae by Mr. G. LL. LUCAS, Meliaceae by Dr. B. STYLES and Mr. F. WHITE, and the Orchidaceae by Mr. P. F. HUNT. Our East African collaborators now include Miss Christine H. S. KABUYE, who has written the account of Oxalidaceae, Dr. J. O. KOKWARO who has done Valerianaceae and Geraniaceae, while Mr. G. R. W. SANGAI has done Sonneratiaceae and Lecythidaceae; Mr. Afzal HANID is working on certain petaloid monocotyledons. Mrs. Susan HOLMES (née Carter) will be visiting Kenya in the Spring of next year to collaborate on the final stages of the Euphorbieae with Mr. P. R. O. BALLY. We are grateful to Dr. M. C. JOHNSTON of the University of Texas for an account of Rhamnaceae.

With the publication of parts already in press nearly one-third of the total Flora, 2750 out of an estimated 10,000—11,000 species, will have been covered since publication began in 1952. The Flora is not sufficiently advanced to make any predictions about when it might be completed, but it is hoped most of it will have been done before the end of the century.

Two changes have been made in the organization of the Flora project. In the past one of the difficulties has been the wastage of trained personnel

to more permanent posts elsewhere, but from April 1967 the Flora team has been transferred to the permanent Kew staff. There has also been some duplication of work for the various Floras with which Kew is associated because of the limitation of responsibilities to geographical areas. A change-over to a systematic basis of work in the Herbarium has just been made at Kew and this will give opportunity for study of groups in depth and the application of a wide taxonomic experience to the various Floras. Inevitably there will be some slowing down of floristic work in the initial stages of taking up new responsibilities, but thereafter it is hoped the various projects will have much to gain. Steps are being initiated to provide better facilities for specialized field-work in East Africa and a continuing close collaboration with local botanists.

General collections received at Kew from the Flora area since September 1966 include 7000 duplicates from the East African Herbarium, about 5500 numbers from resident collectors and over 2000 collected by Kew staff. Notable amongst these collections are the 1200 numbers from Dr. P. J. GREENWAY, largely from his surveys of National Parks in Kenya and southern Tanzania, 3000 numbers from Mrs. Mary RICHARDS, largely from northern Tanzania, and 500 numbers each from Mrs. E. M. TWEEDIE and Mrs. H. G. FAULKNER. Miss D. M. NAPPER collected 400 numbers, mostly Acanthaceae and Cyperaceae, while on secondment to the East African Herbarium in 1969. Messrs. D. N. PEGLER and S. A. RENVOIZE collected 1700 numbers of fungi and 1100 numbers of vascular plants respectively on a joint expedition to Kenya and Tanzania in 1968, while most recently Mr. B. F. MATHEW, working with the Royal Geographical Society South Turkana Expedition, brought back 800 numbers from the little explored area south of Lake Rudolf. Important floristic exploration has followed the opening up of the National Parks in eastern Kenya and southern Tanzania. Improvements in the political situation are beginning to make exploration in the northern regions of Kenya possible once more. Even in areas regarded as relatively well collected, intensive work still reveals much previously overlooked as demonstrated by the collections of Mr. R. B. FADEN from the Thika area less than 50 km. from Nairobi and by the many new records obtained in connection with the Herbaceous Flora of Upland Kenya project.

I have been closely associated with the Flora of Tropical East Africa and with A.E.F.A.T. from their beginnings. At this conference, the last I shall attend in an official capacity, I should like to express again the gratitude to my many friends and associates who have helped in so many ways to facilitate our work at Kew. I feel sure that the spirit of A.E.T.F.A.T. will continue in the future to resolve any conflicting view of botanists and so produce a large measure of agreement in the systematic treatments adopted in the numerous parts of the African regional floras yet to be published.